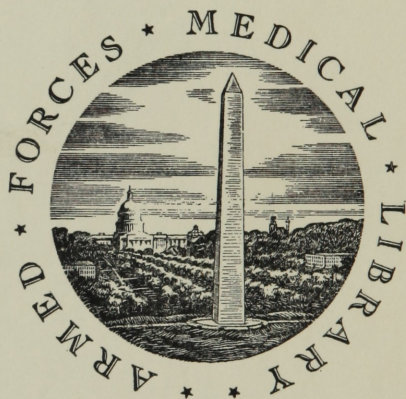




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*John Redman Coxe M.D.*

AN  
ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE, AND PUBLISHED BY

THE REQUEST OF THE

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AT THEIR LAST

BIENNIAL CONGRESS,

IN THE

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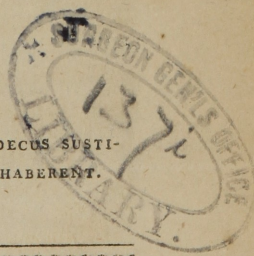
On the 6th day of June, 1805 ;

BY

JOHN B. DAVIDGE, A.M. M.D.

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SI, QUI MEDICINAM EXERCENT, ARTIS SALUTARIS DECUS SUSTI-  
NERENT, FACULTATI MEDICÆ HONOREM HOMINES HABERENT.



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1805.

ORATION

ORATION

General Jackson of Georgia

AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE

1845

OF THE

THE DAY OF JUNE 1845

THE DAY OF JUNE 1845

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# ORATION, &c.



*Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Faculty.*

I RISE to absolve myself from the duties imposed on me by the suffrages of this honourable Society, at its last biennial meeting. Had the choice fallen on any gentleman, who, by a more happy eloquence—a greater fertility of genius—and extensive acquirements in medical erudition, could have met more successfully the expectations of the competent judges present, it would have given me great pleasure. Yet, as the decision of the Society, has rested on me such great duties, and as I feel myself, equally with my compeers, involved in the destinies of our infant Association, I shall not attempt to offer any apologies by which I might be excused from answering the wishes of my associates.

AN apology on the score of time, or paucity of subjects, would not be becoming or modest. For, whether I turn my views to the animal, or vegetable, or mineral kingdom, I perceive a sufficient amplitude of field for speculation. And

nevertheless I have experienced, amidst a profusion of subjects, a difficulty of selection, and this difficulty arises from a conscious inadequacy of talent. I feel before whom I have to speak; and, added to this feeling, I view the extensive circle of medical science, already thickly set with distinguished and illustrious names, boasting a high pre-eminence in their various compartments. How, Mr President, shall I appear amidst such, whose learning has already received the homage of the world, but with solicitude, and distrust of my own abilities?

ENTANGLED in the vast multitude of subjects that environed them, my thoughts, insensibly, became engaged in the great and important qualifications and duties of a Physician. And while I now offer a few thoughts on these interesting points, I hope that I shall be favoured with the clement indulgence of those before whom I have the honour to speak.

THE qualifications, and duties of a Physician, although they constitute the essential part of the medical character, appear to me to have been but very imperfectly considered, even by those who devote themselves to the healing art. The noble and divine art of medicine, whose object is to alleviate and heal the immense mass of diseases, which so perpetually disquiet the peace, and annoy the health of man, and ultimately dissolve society into ruins, by striking from the stage of



life individual members, is too often degraded to the basest purposes. In the hands of ignorance, and impudence, it has become the mean of plunder and murder.

A man, although conscious to himself that he knows nothing of the medicine, by the instrumentality of which he undertakes to cure diseases—and less, if it were possible, of the effects of this medicine—and, least of all, of the œconomy of the human body on which this medicine is to operate, suddenly starts up into a Physician, and prescribes boldly and daringly for any disease whatsoever he may meet with ! The mischief arising from such conduct is incalculable. There is not only the immediate melancholy effects of the fatal prescription, but the mediate evils which are suffered to grow into gigantic strength by the absence of the man of abilities, whose place this Charlatan unhappily fills up. To which may be added the humiliation of the art itself in the eyes of the public, led astray, because they have not within their view such premises as might enable them to make just inductions. But all this, to unprincipled temerity, is a light matter.

THE health, and happiness, and reputation, and even existence of society, are confided to medicine ; nay, the very privacies of domestic life are repositied in the honour of the Physician. Then how vigilant should Physicians be, that the profession of medicine be supported in its true

splendor and dignity. With what emphasis did the ancients, in the language of hieroglyphics, express their veneration for the healing art.

ÆSCULAPIUS, the reputed god of medicine, a personage of high celebrity for medical skill among the Egyptians, they preserved in their temples under the form of a serpent, with an egg at his mouth, and to him they offered up sacrifices, as to the most energetic and powerful of all their gods. They placed him at the head of their Dæmons (men deified for great actions) as the most deserving of divine honours.

THE serpent, in this hieroglyphic symbol, represents to us the science of medicine, and the egg, the world. The breathing of the serpent on the egg, explains, in a most striking figure, their idea of the support the world derives from medicine.

ÆSCULAPIUS, according to Lactantius, was of uncertain parents, and exposed, "*Ab incertis parentibus ortum Æsculapium et expositum.*" According to others he was extracted through the side of his mother, "*Ex utero exsectum,*" and preserved in the cavern of Chiron, and that Lacera was his mother. That, being dead and entombed, he revived, and burst the cearments of his grave. Others again, that he sprang from Lucina, who in Egyptian mythology, is termed the goddess of birth or delivery.



FROM this account of Æsculapius, Pliny no doubt, extracted his account of Cæsar's birth. For that Cæsar was extracted through the side of his mother, and that the family-name had its origin in that circumstance, is, Mr. President, a mere fable. We have no evidence that Cæsar was born in a way different from that in which men in general are born. Were it in place, I might explain to you, not only that Pliny's account of Cæsar's birth, in all probability, had its outlines traced from the above mythological heiroglyphic record, but that the mode of birth with Æsculapius himself, is a mere deception, easily growing out of the fabulous name of his mother Lacera, and dignified into reality by the credulity of the times in which he lived. The word *lacer*, *torn*—or *lacero*, *to tear*, readily interprets the whole. The family name of *Cæsar*, was born by the family nearly one hundred years before the days of Julius Cæsar. There are several facts, pregnant with irrefragible arguments, which might be adduced to shew, that the name *Cæsar*, did not derive its origin from the mode of birth of Julius Cæsar.

It were digression to proceed farther in the life and apotheosis of Æsculapius ; and yet, Sir, they are not uninteresting, as they are delivered down to us in broken fragments of fable.

So high did the science of Medicine stand in the opinion of the Grecians, that Homer in his

Iliad, the first and greatest poetic work of human genius, could not conceive Agamemnon to be safe in battle, notwithstanding the presence of the gods, without the two sons of Æsculapius. That Homer introduced Macháon and Podalirius, the sons of Æsculapius, in consequence of his veneration for the healing art, is deducible, from the fact, that Æsculapius lived a thousand years before the days of Homer, consequentially his two sons could not, in reality, have been present, even were the Trojan war a subject for faithful and authentic record, which, by the way, I can by no means believe. The story of fair Helen, existed only in the brilliant fiction of Homer. From the rich mine of his own exuberant imagination, Homer raised the materials for that superb structure, which has secured to him the admiration of the world.

THE essential, and ornamental qualifications of a Physician, so constantly blend with, and reciprocally pass into each other, that it were no easy matter to touch on them separately and distinctly, I must therefore be permitted to speak of them as they arise before me.

A Physician can never stand, in rank, below a gentleman ; he of consequence has to pass through the same preparatory steps of education. It has, I know, been ingeniously insinuated, that an academical and collegiate education are not necessary to a youth destined to medicine. If it were demonstrable that such an education is by



no means essential, which I must not be understood to grant, I have no hesitation in saying that it is highly ornamental. And I would advise young men to place but a light value on those opinions that discourage classical learning. For there are but few Richardsons or Fieldings, whose soaring minds can rise to the exalted heights of science without the aids of the Romans and Grecians.

THERE will be but little hazard in advancing as a truth, that colloquial ease, and grace, and extent of knowledge, and polish of sentiment, are found, almost exclusively, with men of classical and original education. And with whom should those bright ornaments be more naturally found, than with the youth who is at some future day to make for himself a character in that Faculty, which has contributed so largely to preserve, throughout the long dark night of gothic ignorance, the lamp of science? That the overwhelming tide of barbarism has not inundated the literary world, to whom does this world owe more than to Physicians? I do not intend here, Mr. President, any invidious, indecorous comparison between the faculty of Medicine, and the other equally honourable and enlightened faculties of Law and Divinity.

It is not my idea that a knowledge of the French, or Latin, or Greek, will make a physician, but it is my opinion that a physician ap-



appears on the stage of practice to great disadvantage without something of these languages.

MINDS, early trained to letters, insensibly, and as it were, without effort, become more liberal and polished. The virtues become more generous, the sentiments more humanized, the imagination more brilliant, and the judgment bolder. It is true that education does not consist in an acquaintance with languages, it is the possession of a large stock of ideas. But who is it that learns a language without at the same time getting some knowledge of the time in which it was the living medium of ideal intercourse, and of the people who used it? I never knew a man who wrote handsomely and elegantly, with the exception of the names of which I have made mention, who was not a classical scholar.

THE general usage of the world at present, is, that physicians be educated as other gentlemen, and why we should in America, stand below those of our own profession in other countries, I have to learn. That young Americans are inferior in talents to young men of other nations, is inconsequential of any premises as yet laid before the public; and I hope they will so justly appraise their own connate powers, and the honours of their profession, as to be nobly desirous to have a place on that eminence to which the glory of their country, and the pride of a manly ambition call them.

YOUNG Americans are daily visiting foreign universities, and, as our pecuniary resources shall increase, this practice will become more general. Not only so, but many are engaging in the service of their country, and must remain in foreign stations from one to several years. And it highly comports with the duty and dignity of the faculty of this state, that those young men be prepared with all the ornamental and essential qualifications, that may be required to meet the expectations of strangers, and to maintain the rank of physicians and gentlemen. As the individual members of the medical profession shall be learned, and dignified in their deportment, so will be the respect of society towards them. Physicians will always fix their own rank.

Not only is it proper that particular attention be paid to the academical part of education of young men intended for medicine, but after they enter on the study, it would be advantageous, and within the duty of their preceptors, did they frequently instruct them in the nature and extent of the profession in which they have engaged. They should weed their minds of the follies of the present day, that two or three years will be sufficient to get a competent knowledge of medicine. No young man, be the vigour of his mind, what it may, ever advanced beyond the purlieu of medicine under five or seven years. Within that term he cannot with honor



to himself, or safety to his patients, commit himself in the slight bark of his own slender knowledge, to an ocean so extensive, and so uncertain, as the practice of medicine.

WHEN we have read a little, we think that we know much, but after we shall think much, we will feel that we know but little. We cannot, in youth, collect together too great a stock of information. It will be well that those important truths be well settled in our minds.

AFTER a young Physician shall enter on the theatre of practice, he will have but few opportunities to add to his knowledge from books, and if he engage much in the fascinating pleasures of society, he will have as little taste for books or science, as he will have time to bestow on them. He must be frequently called into consultation with physicians of learning, and well trained amidst the scenes of sickness ; and what will be his sensations when he shall experience himself to be wholly at the mercy of his colleague ? What will he feel when he perceives the politeness of his colleague to be the only mound that defends him from overwhelming disgrace ? But, where young men, unprovided with knowledge, daringly adventure into the scenes of practice, a physician of virtue and understanding may feel it to be his duty to guard society from the lamentable and irremediable consequences of empirical experiments ; he may feel it to be his duty to repress the luxuriant growth

of shameless quackery, by laying the weight of his just censures on the *conduct* of the man, if not on the man himself, who has, with such effrontery, stept out to murder his fellow-mortals. And who, among the intelligent and honest, would say, that this physician's sense of duty, is contrary to the obligations he owes to society ?

WITH the lawyer and the divine, there may be time to consult authorities, and mature by reflection the opinion to be given ; but with the physician, in many instances, there is not a moment in which he might consult authorities and prepare his judgment ; he visits, judges, and acts, almost in the same instant. And the slightest error destroys, perhaps, one of the most valuable lives in society. Nay, every life is valuable in itself, and to its immediate connections.

A YOUNG physician cannot enter upon the field of public life with too much information, but he may, and too often does, with too little. He enters at cypher, and comes out at nought. His whole life, at best, is a mere blank ; and, the best we can say of him, is, that he has done no harm. A poor negative character indeed, for a professional man, who would willingly be thought a man of honor and distinction.

WITHOUT the slightest derogation from the authority, or honor of this body, I must be permitted to admonish young physicians not to



conceive themselves at the zenith of their medical honours, by being in possession of a permission, conveyed by a certificate, to practise medicine. A certificate can only raise them to the rank of licentiates. And were they to remove to any other state or country, they could lay no just claim to the rank of a physician, nor be entitled to an opinion in a consultation. If such were granted, it would be the favour of courtesy, and not the acknowledgment of a legitimate right. It might be solicited, but could not be demanded. There is a becoming impatience, growing out of a laudable ambition, which should urge young men on to the first rank, and first honors in their profession. Then let me persuade young men not to consider a year or two extraordinary, spent in study, as lost time. Let them anticipate the moments in which they may be employed in the service of their country, and when, after some bold atchievement of a Truxton or a Preble, they will have committed to their care, the brave officers and men who have dared to be foremost in avenging the wrongs suffered by their country. Let them bring to their bosoms the feelings that then will crowd upon them. Who can conceive the perturbation and distraction of a young physician, to whom the last hopes of a gallant officer, (perhaps a Sterrett, a Decatur, or a Rogers,) shall be entrusted, who may be conscious to himself, that he knows not how to raise a depressed bone of the skull, coaptate the ends of a fractured limb, or secure a

wounded artery ; an accident probably received in the very act of waving the banners of his country over the deck of an hostile ship.

EVEN amidst the calmer scenes of rural life, where most of our physicians will have to act their part, there are innumerable casualties which daily overtake the peaceful husbandman, the stay and support of society. Here, also, will be demands for anatomical knowledge and chirurgical address. How young physicians can lie down, and sleep in peace, night after night, without the least idea of anatomy, is inconceivable to me.

THE object to which a young man who enters on the study of medicine, should first direct his attention, is anatomy. A knowledge of anatomy is so indispensably necessary, that it is in fact the foundation on which the whole superstructure of practice is raised, A knowledge of the œconomy of the animal machine, on which the art of practical medicine depends, cannot ever be pretended to without a previous acquaintance with the situation and juxtaposition of the individual parts. And who will affect to determine on the diseased condition of an organ, who does not know its natural physiology.

THE Materia Medica also deserves particular attention. A knowledge of the properties of vegetables that are daily to be used, certainly



can want no recommendation to a candid and intelligent mind. I do not advise a minute knowledge of botany, such indeed would require a whole life. But so far as relates to the general œconomy and property of vegetables, especially those that are used in daily prescriptions, cannot be considered as useless information, nor the time, occupied in examining into this œconomy, and those properties, as thrown away.

*tears*  
 CHYMISTRY, as the key that unlocks the door of Nature's curious repositories, will also solicit, with all its inviting beauties, the regards of the medical student. It will be as a telescope to the brilliant scenery of the heavens, in which the aqueous and igneous vapours play their various parts. It will reduce those astonishing and sublime meteorological phœnomina to easy explication, and enable the student to walk with a certain and sure step, where even a Newton dared not to venture. It will unfold to him the component parts of the solids and fluids of the human body, and give him an intimate acquaintance with those chymical preparations, by the instrumentality of which, he must expect to subdue the most formidable diseases to which the body is subject.

MATHEMATICS belong more properly to the academical part of the education of a physician. And metaphysics I have always conceived to be of little intrinsic value ; for, when a student shall have read Descartes, Berkley, Hume, and

even Locke, he will find to his great disappointment and mortification, that metaphysics are at best a mere science of ingenious conjecture. That his mind will be perpetually entangled amidst the subtleties, and verbal disquisitions which at every sentence it meets with. He will not find out how the mind commands the muscles into action, nor how the senses apprise the mind of objects without. Nevertheless I would not have young physicians pass over those amusing dreams of learned men altogether. If there be any thing in this science solid and intelligible, it will be found in Doctor Reid, who has been generous enough and learned enough to bring the world back to common sense.

BUT all the responsibilities of medicine do not remain with young men, there are qualifications and duties, that we who have been some years in the practice of medicine, should feel and practise. It is among the first of our duties, Mr. President, to be an example to those who are to follow us, in learning, generosity, humanity, and liberality of sentiment; in attention to the interests of our patients, and in the maintenance of a reciprocation of urbanity and politeness among ourselves. Our duty leads us to take young men by the hand, to open the door for them to all interesting and important cases, where circumstances will permit. They have a claim on, and a right to our patronage; they, by the just demands of courtesy, are entitled to res-



pectful attentions ; they must be our successors when we step from the stage of life, and it is within the duties we owe to society, to leave our friends and patients in sound hands.

NOTHING can be more savage and barbarous than a certain practice, which, to the disgrace of medicine has had place in the medical world. I allude to the shameful stratagems, ~~whose~~ *such the* sole object was to paralyze the honourable and laudable efforts of young men, to entangle the confidence of the public, in qualified equivocal expressions, and thus defeat the exertions of modest youth. An old physician gains but a mean and contemptible victory when he promulgates to the world an error of youth, which accident has thrown in his way ; nor is the shade of his conduct to appear among the brighter tints of character, who makes it his business to sow among his neighbours the magic sounds—"he will do for a young man !"

AN enlarged and generous mind is always open and candid. It is the contemptible cunning of low intellect, that prides itself in unintelligible equivocations, and mysterious innuendo.

WHILE we feel it to be our honour to promote the interests of medicine, by inviting the public confidence to meritorious youth, we should chill the hopes of daring intrusion by cold disdain, and abash it by repulsive con-

tempt. And if these prove insufficient, let the laws avenge their own insults.

It would be well to have it settled in our minds as a leading sense of our duties, that there is something beyond mere intentions, however good, in the practice of medicine. We are not only to act up to the extent of our abilities, but I am persuaded I do not go too far, when I advance, that a physician, who does not, in perilous cases, obtain, so far as he can, any accessory aid, if in his conscience he believe it to be superior to his own, is responsible to society ; farther, he is answerable to that Great Eternal, who weighs all our actions in the nicest balance of his justice. Then how unsafe, how base, how ignominious is it for a physician to make his personal ambition and jealousy the only guides of his conduct.

THE benefit and safety of society should ever be among the most prominent motives with a physician. His happiness and reputation should be, as indeed they generally are, dependent on a conscientious discharge of his duty to society, and to his fellow practitioners. Candor and genuine abilities, seldom fail eventually to raise a man to distinction ; and cunning, intrigue, and mean wiles, as seldom fail to cover him with contempt.

THIS body is the only repository of the medical safety of the state, and I hope that such



rules and usages will rise into laws and obligations, as will effectually save it from being a source of disgrace, or organ of mischief to the state. It is with this body to stamp the future character of medicine in our state, and society at large expects much from it.

THERE are other duties, Mr. President, which medical men, I am apprehensive, do not keep sufficiently in view. Medicine has peculiar and indispensable claims on all who cultivate it. There is a certain order of duties distinct from what immediately relates to the bed of sickness, and are more moral than medical. These, by engaging in the profession, we tacitly, if not formally, bind ourselves to observe; and in fact there are no duties that can be less easily dispensed with.

THOSE of us who have taken the degree of doctor of medicine, must bear in recollection the solemnity, and sacredness of the promise, by which we pledged ourselves to envelop in inviolable secrecy, all the privacies of domestic life; to cover, from the view of the world, individual misfortunes; and to hide, in oblivious night, all matters reposed in our honour as professional men. Our promise is no less than an oath, with all its solemnity and obligation, that we will maintain the confidence reposed in us, and, that through us, neither feelings nor reputation shall receive hurt.

OF all men, physicians are the most immediately connected with the harmony of society. There are no men to whom so much of private and domestic life is trusted as physicians, and that of necessity. At all times, and under all circumstances, they have access to families, and should ever be mindful to place a decent, becoming inattention between themselves and all subjects of observation, not immediately addressed to them. Whenever it can be done, physicians should always lose the professional man, in the private gentleman.

BUT, Mr President, we do not understand the obligations of medicine to remain in force, in matters that concern the peace, tranquillity, or safety of the state. Whenever the interests of the whole are touched, the duties we owe to a part are loosened, and no longer obligatory; we become as private citizens. To suppose that physicians could make the duties of medicine paramount to their allegiance to the state, were a base slander on the dignity of their profession; they can never be degraded into accomplices in infractions of social order; they ever remain dissociated from perturbed violators of the peace.

To what has been partially traced out, there succeeds another class of duties, not sufficiently and rightly appraised. These are the duties which have their origin in the hazard of a pa-



tient's case. When from the accidents and characteristics of a disease, a Physician may apprehend serious danger, it immediately becomes incumbent on him to make the family acquainted with the condition of the patient by the enunciation of an honest unequivocal opinion. It belongs to the Physician, so far as he can, to soften, and mollify the emotions of mind, pregnant with the keenest sorrow and distress, which at the terrible moment of death, crowd on, and oppress the sensibilities of relatives. By timely premonition, a Physician is to prepare the minds of those who are about to suffer a bereavement irreparable, and for which there can be no adequate consolation—a bereavement, which shades with deepest melancholy, the anxious minds of surrounding kindred. What can be less sufferable than to have the tenderest cords and dearest ties of relationship, torn asunder by the rude violence of disease, without a moment's anticipation of evil !

I CAN have no good opinion, Sir, of that disingenuous and barbarous custom, which insinuated itself into common usage during the days of medical mystery, of deceiving the patient and friends with flattering, deceptive falsehoods. The final separation and last adieus of the most endearing friendships, are but ill suited to deceit and flattery. And I would willingly persuade myself that a Physician would be the last of all men to play off, at the death-bed of a patient, the

game of self-importance. He should with piety acknowledge, and pay homage to, the ruling hand of providence.

THE art of medicine is truly a divine art, when ably and conscientiously exercised in the relief and cure of the many diseases to which man is subject. The eternal Logos ennobled it. He gave sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, strength to the palsied, and health to those who were sick of a fever.

MOST men are desirous of being held in honourable estimation when they themselves shall be gathered up unto their fathers. But, Mr. President, there is but one sure way. It is this, let them, before they go hence, embalm their memories in their own virtues, and recommend them, by noble actions, to the faithful keeping of their grateful contemporaries.

WHAT can be more pleasurable to a mind of reflection, and a heart refined by virtue, than in the last moments of life, to be conscious that all the duties, medical and social, have been honestly and with becoming courtesy, discharged? True greatness results only from virtuous conduct.

I must be permitted to indulge in a few words to such Physicians as shall take upon themselves the duties of the Accoucheur—those who may immediately devote themselves to the relief and management of the evils to which the more



*which* amiable and lovely half of society is destined. With what indefatigable care and industry should a Physician qualify himself for, and afterwards, with what solicitude, patience, address, and delicacy, should he engage in, those offices ~~whose~~ *the* great and important duties afford him a part to act, in calming the most direful apprehensions in moments perilous and big with terror ; a part to act, in infusing confidence into minds, timid and alarmed at every disordered sensation ; and in disarming, by tender attentions, the menacing anticipations of the refined, though endearing, delicacies and sensibilities of those, who at once are the polish and ornaments of society, and who alone can make life valuable to man.

To the tender and delicate attentions of a gentleman, such will be mindful to add the skill and address of the accoucheur, who waits on the amiable, beauteous object of his care, with a mind fully furnished with all the rules of his art, and well fitted and prepared to meet all the possible accidents of the moment. In the accoucheur, the skill of the physician should unite with the urbanity and tender civilities of the friend.

In all consultations, physicians should be mindful to avoid all explanations in the presence of the patient. It can be no alleviation to the pain of a patient, or in any degree soothe his mental anxiety, to hear the discussion of points

in medical pathology. It can be of no moment to him, in whose opinion the consultation ends, nor by whom the mode of practice is settled.

WHENEVER a physician, in an accidental visit, shall be solicited to give an opinion on a case under the care of another physician, and in the absence of that physician, he should, with frankness and candor, inform the friends, that it would be a violation of his duty, and the established etiquette of medicine, except where a patient would absolutely suffer before the physician in ordinary, could attend. And every physician, when called into consultation, should be careful to wait for, and give his opinion to the physician in ordinary attendance. Nor is a consulting physician permitted to extend his opinions to the conduct of his colleague, previous to the time he may be called. His views are to be confined to the present condition of his patient; he is called in to consult his colleague, and not to criticise his practice.

PHYSICIANS, between whom there may be personal displeasure, should, with becoming courteousness, consult together: The private feelings of the gentleman, should never be mixed with the professional duties of the physician.

THE humanity and feelings of a physician, will ever teach him, that the poorest mendicant



that solicits bread at his door, is not below his pity and notice ; and his education, and the rank his profession has always maintained in society, will suggest to him, that no personage, however exalted, can be more than his companion and equal.

FOR several hundred years, medical practitioners have been divided into physicians, and surgeons, and apothecaries. Men, affecting ingenuity, and a talent of discrimination, have written copiously, if not intelligibly on the natural and professional distinctions of the duties attached to each. They have said, that the salutary art of itself, as it were, divides into those separate branches. To me the matter is not so obvious and clear. And if I do not take their bare word for it, I see but little of demonstration in all they have written. And that they have not established those particular distinctions, is not because they have not laboured in many a long and tedious paragraph, to impress conviction of their fanciful hypothesis. An ingenious mathematician may undertake to demonstrate to a pupil where a circle begins, and where it ends ; yet, if this pupil be a man of common sense, he will, after all the elaborate shew of learning in his teacher, be at a loss to conceive, satisfactorily to himself, why a circle should be said to begin at one point rather than another.

A GREAT and important point arises in consultation, a gangrene, for instance, succeeds to a compound fracture. Who is to settle the mode of practice? Can any man, who is not well acquainted with the pathology of the disease, and history of medical practice? Or, I will suppose that a vein is opened; an inflammation seizes on its internal surface, and fever is lighted up. The patient's life is in the utmost danger. Is the case medical or surgical? There is Scrophula, Lues Venerea, Small-pox artificially communicated, and many other diseases which it were useless to mention, *are they* medical or surgical?

It may be expedient to throw cases of operation into the hands of men of peculiar manual dexterity. Indeed, men of a certain taste, composure of mind, and a hand that never trembles, may be, and undoubtedly are, better suited to engage in dangerous and bold operations; nay, such are the only men who are calculated for such scenes. But a collectedness of mind, and dexterity of hand, with a good eye, argue neither superiority, nor inferiority, of medical understanding or judgment. A great surgeon must be a good physician, but a great physician is not necessarily a good operator.

EUROPE, too, has its apothecaries. A physician visits and prescribes, and the prescription is sent to an illiterate apothecary, or most likely



falls into the hands of an apothecary's boy, generally not too well informed, or too attentive to his business; the prescription, with the directions, are uniformly in Latin, and it were not wonderful if both apothecary and apprentice should turn out to be inadequate to the translation. The physician is deceived, and the patient is killed. The history of medical practice in Europe, is not silent on these points. It speaks a language easy of interpretation to the good sense of America; a language, which I hope we shall continue to explain, to the safety and advantage of our patients. In Europe the physician is responsible to his patient, and yet the physician and the patient are in the power of an apothecary, too often intemperate, and who has but little dignity in the estimation of the public to support.

A PHYSICIAN may prescribe for twelve or fifteen patients in the course of the day, and not two of those patients, will, perhaps, have medicine from the same laboratory, as apothecaries shops are frequently called. In the one shop, the medicine may be recently made, and in the other, due attention is not paid to the forms of the pharmacopœia: And many a spoiled and adulterated dose goes into a physician's prescription.

THE person who puts up a prescription, should be responsible to, and consequently de-

pendant on the physician ; and a physician's duty obliges him to pay particular attention to his medicine ; he is a competent judge and not readily deceived. I hope that apothecaries will never have place in America. There is no place to be filled up between a physician and a druggist. It would not be at all surprising if the refinements of Europe lead the physicians thereof to employ amanuenses, as it is too mechanical to write.

IN no place can a young man spend the first three or four years of his study to such advantage as in a physician's office : He there unites observation with reading. In some parts of Europe it is customary for apothecaries, in the more early stages of diseases, to prescribe and act the part of a physician. It is not for me to inform this learned body, that the same good judgment and information are as necessary in the first prescription as in what may follow. This body too well knows, that the whole of the subsequent treatment, depends on the management of the disease during the first hours : In the hands of rash ignorance, the mildest medicine is fraught with great mischief. A Physician alone is qualified to prescribe a dose of medicine. It were far better that a patient be trusted to the unassisted efforts of nature, than to be put under injudicious treatment.



THESE, Mr. President, in principle, though not in full detail, are my views of the qualifications and duties of a Physician. As to general morals, I leave them to the able guardians of the pulpit, they are within their duties ; yet I may add, that, to a Physician, there remains no apology for intemperance ; intoxication, in the word itself, implies temporary deprivation of judgment : And as little can be said in behalf of coarse impassioned language. A Physician, as he moves in the first circle of society, should ever be an example of virtue, modesty, and politeness, discouraging by his own conduct, the extravagancies of those with whom his life may be a criterion.

Accept, Mr. President, and Gentlemen, the homage of my esteem, and personal regards.















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